



# The Thailand Hitch-Hiker Nathalie Gütermann



**Nathalie Gütermann is a TV Producer, Presenter and Lifestyle-Journalist...**

**And she is a Society Insider. Nathalie was born in New York and brought up in Germany and Switzerland. She is a descendant of one of Europe's oldest and most affluent entrepreneurial families. Gütermann crafts products and silk threads are household names in more than 80 countries - resulting in Nathalie being titled by Germany's media as the 'Silk Princess'.**

**Thanks to her personal and professional background she has met many well known personalities and celebrities. Her network of interesting people covers the globe. Amongst her friends you could name members of international aristocracy as well as prominent figures in the world of Culture, Art, Business and Entertainment.**

**M**y name is Nathalie, and I am going to take you on an adventure that you may never have ever dreamed that you could take! Who doesn't dream about getting away from it all, letting the spirit flow and being allowed to merge into a world full of freedom, nature and adventure? Together you and I are going to create our own personal 'Road Movie' in Thailand, the land of smiles, and simply rush away with it.....

So hitch a ride along with me as I show you what I found along my journey, and enjoy the sights and sounds of Thailand, from a passenger's point of view!

Our two-wheel ourney would encompass the distance of 3000 km from the north of Thailand, beginning in Chiang Mai, to the south in Phuket. I am not talking about the typical Thai mopeds which can be hired for a few Thai Baht almost everywhere. I am also not talking about heavy Harleys, but about the awesome and powerful, all terrain BMW motor bikes, the new R 1200 GS and the F 650 GS. 25 years ago BMW started its GS model range, and with

**"The way of 1000 km towards happiness starts with a single step"**

it the huge success story of the big flat twin Boxer engine, for many the ultimate travel bike without exception.

I only found them two months ago: the 'Discovery Moto Tour' the ultimate insider recommendation for motor bike lovers, suited for all age groups, for all fitness levels, for singles and couples, for men and women, for experienced bike freaks and bloody beginners, like me! Yes, I have to admit. I'm a 100% newcomer to biking even as a pillion rider. That's 'Passenger Rider' in biker lingo. Never ever did I fancy the idea to mount a motorbike, until I coincidentally met the brilliant Briton James Shayler, 40 years young, and a well travelled bon vivant, owner of this interesting adventure company, as well as the best ambassador for the exclusive explorer trips, which he is organizing together with a friend, all 'for the fun of it'.

"Originally we were looking for a good excuse to combine business and pleasure" he reveals to me with a smile. "My partner Mike and I have been entrepreneurs for 15 years, have earned a good living, but at one stage we decided that we wanted to escape the daily grind. We both had the desire to travel, to explore the beautiful parts of the world, and to find new friends along the way..."

## A luxury guided adventure

James Shayler is living his dream more than ever now, and is successful with his adventure tours. The tall, white haired man by no means looks like an 'Asphalt Cowboy' who is celebrating a successful off-road trip with plenty of Thai Whisky, and to vanish into the Spartan simplicity of a bamboo hut for the night. The same is true for his customers. Already the information on the website and online brochure carries the message: this is no trip for softies and chill bikers, neither is it a showy speed trip for machos. In fact the participants are experiencing a 'Luxury Guided Adventure', including licensed Thai tour guides who boast proper training. With the establishment of "Discovery Moto Tours" only two years ago in Phuket, the two friends, James and Mike, have discovered a small but very exclusive lifestyle niche, catering perfectly to an up-market clientele with a thirst for adventure, and plenty of wanderlust. "I have to admit we don't want to ramble around the world as backpackers" James

**This is no trip for softies and chill bikers!**

continues. "Our program includes first class accommodation in 4 - 5 star hotels, excellent food in selected restaurants, fascinating excursions, and above all, breathtaking routes which you will not find in any travel guide. We also offer our tours with 4 wheel drive jeeps, but our motorbike trips in Morocco, Spain and foremost of all Asia, are simply unbeatable!"

So, no excuse! Even though I have never even sat on a bike before, I allow myself to be lulled into the 'Easy Rider Feeling' and book the 'Grand Thai Luxury Tour'. Having been living on the island of Koh Samui for the last 3 years, I had always wanted to travel through my favourite country, quench my thirst for knowledge, and live my personal dream of fulfilment. Apparently Thailand has a reputation for being a biker's paradise. Who knew? Spectacular canyons, countless wild single trails, colourful markets, gigantic temple complexes and nature undiluted. This trip was exactly what I was searching for.



The 'Discovery Moto Tours' team has a nice idea and buys notebooks, coloured crayons and sweets for the little ones. When I open my bag with the 'treasures' hundreds of little dirty hands are stretching out towards me.



There is a lot of anticipation up in the air between the participants, and also a lot of expectations. After all the 'all-inclusive' package does not come cheap and everybody expects value for their investment. The 'trip of a lifetime' costs about 3.500 B. Pounds.



The general rule is never brake hard, always wear the helmet, boots and gloves, and always have a first-aid kit handy. That we will need it a few days later while crossing over to Koh Lanta we do not know at this time. More about this later . . .



Why not meet this unexpected challenge and dare to try something new with like-minded people, and define the journey itself as the destination?

Carpe Diem – Seize the day! It is time to start an exciting exploration trip which will keep us totally enthralled for the next 14 days, from morning till evening. We start our motorbike trip in the north, with exactly 2937km ahead of us to reach our goal. From Chiang Mai via Mae Hong Son, Mae Sariang and Mae Sot to Burma (Myanmar). Then on to Sukothai, Kanchanaburi, Hua Hin, and the island of Koh Lanta to finish the trip in the far south of Phuket.

Already the start is lovely. The luxurious Ayatana Hamlet & Spa Resort in Chiang Mai, built in Lanna style, is an enchanting small boutique hotel with only 36 cozy rooms. Dinner is reserved for 10 people at the pool for 7pm. Aside from myself, promoter James, and the two Thai tour guides Harry and Nat, three biker couples from the UK signed up for the trip with DMT. Through an English motorbike magazine, and word of mouth recommendations, they heard about this very special tour operator that does not normally advertise beyond Europe. There is a lot of anticipation up in the air between the participants, and also a lot of expectations. After all, the 'all-inclusive' package does not come cheap, and everybody expects value for their investment. The 'trip of a lifetime' costs about 3500 British Pounds.

"Very good, we are all about the same age – a nice group". These are my thoughts after I am introduced to the other participants. For the next 14 days we have to get on with each other somehow. Everybody is between 40 and 45 years old, and all of them are definitely experienced bikers with high demands.

Carol and Neil, owners of a successful print shop, are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, and treat themselves to something very special with this trip. John, a music producer, and former drummer of famous rock groups like Uriah Heep and Nazareth, wants to show Thailand to his girl friend Carina. And Andrew, financial director of a renowned London real estate company, indulges in a holiday from his exhausting job in a way he and his wife Helen love most: mounting a cool bike and getting some fresh air around their noses.....

## A motorcycling adventure of epic proportions, full of excitement, new discoveries, friendship, and stunning scenery.

As different as the three couples from the UK might be, they have a common bond: the passion for hot motorbikes! Before long, I too will become inspired by this journey I will never forget.

Riding a bike is like a love affair: passionate, classy, cool, very sexy and there are always new surprises around the next bend.

The first point on our tour program is the so called "Mae Wang Loop". The 253km long track towards Chiang Rai starts in Sanpathong, 18km southwest of Chiang Mai. Fear is creeping up on me in view of the highly polished motocross bikes.

My God.....don't lose your nerve now.....

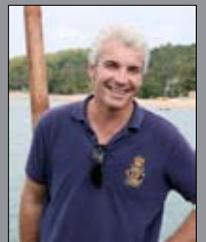
So that's how it all begins...Our adventure continues in a detailed journal on my website. Take some time to ride with us, the wind in your hair, and the taste for adventure caressing your palette as we seek luxury, and the love of life.

Nathalie



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Luxury Guided Motorcycle Adventures